

Phoenix Epidemiology and Clinical Research Branch (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)

<http://www.niddk.gov/>

| <i>Location</i> | <i>Contact Numbers</i> | <i>Contact 1</i> | <i>Contact 2</i> |
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Overview

Diabetes Clinical Research

Clinical research is patient-oriented research. Research may be conducted in human volunteers or on samples from humans. NIH-funded studies are carefully designed to answer specific medical questions while protecting participants' safety. Well conducted clinical trials are the fastest and safest way to find improved treatments and preventions for diseases. Clinical trials or interventional trials determine whether experimental preventions, treatments, or new ways of using known therapies are safe and effective under controlled conditions. Observational or natural history studies examine health issues and disease development in groups of people or populations.

The Branch is the only externally sited branch of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). The Branch houses four senior scientists of the National Institute and focuses its research on diabetes and the American Indian population, especially the Pima Indians of Arizona. The scientific mission of the Branch is to determine the etiology of Type II Diabetes Mellitus as it occurs among Pima Indians of Arizona. This population of Native Americans has the highest reported prevalence and incidence rate of this disease of any population in the world. Branch researchers have used several different scientific approaches to find the cause of the disease including:

- (1) Clinical investigation;
- (2) Molecular genetic studies; and
- (3) Biochemical approaches.

The branch develops and applies epidemiological and clinical methodologies in the investigation of diabetes and its complications, obesity, and digestive and kidney diseases. Field studies and clinical investigations among the Pima Indians and collaborative clinical investigations on selected populations in the United States and other countries are underway. Clinical studies and studies of the genetic determinants of diabetes are carried out in the 24-bed clinical research unit and the basic science research laboratories located within the Phoenix Indian Medical Center. One of the scientists, Peter Bennett, M.D., is also director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Center for Design, Methodology and Analysis of Epidemiological and Clinical Investigations in Diabetes.

In terms of genetic research and the prevention of diabetes, activities include pedigree and genetic linkage studies, and the Diabetes Prevention Program, a multi-center clinical trial in prevention of Type II Diabetes. Clinical research also focuses on:

- (1) The role of energy expenditure and food intake in the regulation of body weight;
- (2) Autonomic nervous system control of energy metabolism; and
- (3) Genetics of obesity and energy metabolism.